

Application No. 09/762,778  
Paper dated August 25, 2003  
In Reply to Office Action of April 24, 2003  
Attorney Docket No. 702-010062

### AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

#### Listing of Claims

##### Claims 1-11 (Cancelled)

*PL*  
*cont.*

Claim 12. (Currently Amended): A mineral wool plant substrate comprising a coherent matrix of mineral wool and a quantity and up to 20 volume % of an ion-exchange agent comprising an ion-exchange capacity of at least about 15 meq/100g dry weight, wherein the ion-exchange agent is present in a maximum amount of 20 volume % and has a stable structure, exhibiting a non-clay like behavior with respect to swelling and shrinking.

Claim 13. (Previously Presented): The substrate according to claim 12, wherein the ion-exchange agent is a cation-exchange agent.

Claim 14. (Previously Presented): The substrate according to claim 12, wherein the ion-exchange agent comprises soil minerals.

Claim 15. (Currently Amended): The substrate according to claim 12, wherein the ion-exchange agent has a non-clay like behavior behaviour with respect to swelling and shrinkage shrinkage.

Claim 16. (Currently Amended): The substrate according to claim 12, wherein the ion-exchange agent has an average pore size of less than 25 µm, smaller than the average pore size of mineral wool having a density of less than about 72 kg/m<sup>3</sup>.

Claim 17. (Previously Presented): The substrate according to claim 12, wherein the ion-exchange agent comprises a zeolite.

Claim 18. (Currently Amended): The substrate according to claim 12, further comprising an organic substance selected from the group consisting of sphagnum and peat, wherein the organic substance substitutes, substituting the mineral wool for up to 20 volume %.

Claim 19. (Previously Presented): The substrate according to claim 12, further comprising clay, substituting the mineral wool for up to about 20 volume %.

Claim 20. (Previously Presented): The substrate according to claim 12, for use as a growing block.

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Claim 21. (Previously Presented): A growing mat comprising the substrate of claim 12.

Claim 22. (Previously Presented): A substrate comprising a coherent matrix of mineral wool, a pre-determined amount of clay and a pre-determined amount of an organic substance, substituting the mineral wool for up to 20 volume %.

Claim 23. (Previously Presented): The substrate according to claim 22, wherein the organic substance is selected from the group consisting of sphagnum and peat.

Claim 24. (Previously Presented): The substrate according to claim 15, wherein the ion-exchange agent has a stable zeolite, cage-like structure.

Claim 25. (Previously Presented): The substrate according to claim 12, wherein the ion-exchange agent has an ion-exchange capacity of about 30 meq/100g dry weight.

Claim 26. (Previously Presented): The substrate according to claim 12, wherein the ion-exchange agent has an ion-exchange capacity of about 40 meq/100g dry weight.

Claim 27. (Previously Presented): The substrate according to claim 18, wherein the organic substance is selected from the group consisting of sphagnum and peat.